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(Translation specifically requested.)

THE NAN-CHAO CONFEDERACY

On 6 September 1948, the Kun-ming Observer disclosed that leaders of native tribes west of the Ku Chiang, under the direction of the headman at Kan-yai Hsien, Tao Ching-pan (Tao Pao-t'u), are planning a movement for independence and the formation of the so-called Nan-chao (ancient name given to the area in which the tribes reside) Confederacy. When the news reached Pao-shan, Yunnan, the people, heretofore preoccupied with prices and currency values, became a little uneasy.

The reason behind this movement is one of long-standing dissatisfaction and enmity based on failure to effect land reforms and usurpation of the powers of local chieftains by the head of the Government Establishment Bureau of the Central Government. The disaffection of the native headmen has been furthered by events in Siam and Burma, and by the slight success of China's bandit-suppression campaign. The success or failure of the Nan-chao independence movement depends on the extent of the headman's preparations and on the counter policies of the Chinese government in meeting their demands.

Leader of the movement is the King of the Tribes of Western Yunnan, Tao Ching-pan whose original family name was Hsi. He now holds the position of headman for Kan-yai Hsien, which is under the jurisdiction of the Ying-chiang Hsien Government Establishment Bureau. In his opposition to Chinese authority he is carrying on the work of his father, Tao An-chen (courtesy name, P'ei-sheng), who was a disturbing element until his death. In 1942 the younger Tao raised the slogan of "arouse the tribes and annihilate the Chinese" after the fall of the Sheng-lung border areas to the Japanese. He considered the Japanese as saviors. In February 1945 he was one of the leaders in a league of five tribes which unexpectedly attacked government forces that had defeated the Japanese.

Tao Pao-t'u and his father both studied in Japan, where the elder Tao received an audience with Emperor Meiji who urged him to establish an independent Kan-yai nation with Japanese help, but the plan was defeated by the Manchus.

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Tao Pao-t'u is the son-in-law of Headman Mu-pang-tu of north Burma and husband of the sister of the wife of Thakin Nu, the Burmese Prime Minister. His eldest son, Tao Ch'eng-yueh (courtesy name, Wei-po), is also a tribal chieftain.

It must be emphasized that the proposed federation originates with Tao and is not the result of a demand by the majority of the people. As a matter of fact, the headmen constitute a feudal class which enslaves and oppresses the native population. Records show that Headman Kan Yen-tao is from Chiang-ning in Kiangsu, Nan T'ien-hung from Shang-yuen in Kiangsu, Ming Pan-chiang from Pao-shan in Kiangsu, and Wang Shih-fang from Kiangsi. Chan Fa-sun, also from Kiangsu, is a relative of Kan Yen-tao, and Lung-ch'uan-to, Hu-sa-lai, and La-sa-kai are all descended from Szechwan ancestors. Of the ten border chieftains on the west bank of the Nu Chiang, only two are descended from aborigines, K'an of Mang-mao Hsien and To of Che-fang.

Reporters in Pao-shan, Yunnan, are reserved in their opinions of how serious the matter is, pending further developments. The editor of the Hsin-ming Observer, Lung Sheng-wu, whose newspaper by odd coincidence is the only one disclosing the news that Tao Pao-t'u is advocating a Han-chao Confederacy, has been a foe of the Tao family since 1930, when he was overseer of the Sheng-lung border area.

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